

NEWSY NOTES

By AGRICOLA

OLD NORTH-COUNTRY BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

We now turn to some of the more cheerful aspects of Northern folk-lore. An amazing number of trivial occurrences were imagined to be signs of future good or ill luck, and from these the following may be selected as matters of interest to the general reader. It was unlucky to open an umbrella in the house, to hang a picture over a door, to walk under a ladder, or to kill a sparrow. (Personally I believe that many of these prohibitive superstitions had their origin in an attempt to prevent accidents; for example, opening an umbrella in the small room of a miner's cottage, might be a danger to the children's eyes.) Among the luck-bringers were black cats, white heathers, piebald horses, and horse-hoofs. It was very lucky to find a horse shoe that had not been carried upside down or the luck spills out. It is a far cry to Arabia deserta, but I have read that the nomad Arabs hang a horse shoe over the tent door to ensure the fecundity of the inmates—thus connecting the shoe with the old phallic worship. A cat of any other color than black was always a bad omen. It is on account of the fore-mentioned belief, though a lingering superstition still connected with such a feline with witches and Satan.

Breaking a mirror or spilling salt were equally unlucky—seven years bad luck dozed the perpetrator: these articles were scarce and costly once they were broken or spilled in their defence. One could pinch the ill effects by throwing a pinch of the salt three over the left shoulder with the right hand. Salt should never be borrowed, but if sternly necessary, then it must on no account be repaid! Many trifling actions might lead to the breaking of old friendships. The fire must never be stirred (stirred with a "poker" to revive it) in a friend's house, unless the friendship is of at least seven years' standing. No one wishing to keep the peace would wash the hands in a basin, as another person, or cross a knife and fork, or give a knife or other sharp-edged object, as such unfortunate acts are always followed by a quarrel. The knife "cuts friendship", but a small payment in return for the gift will propitiate fate.

Taking another direction; a young maiden was instructed to look at the first new moon of the year through a new unwashed silk handkerchief. As many moons as she sees, so many years will she remain unmarried. If she was foolish enough to help herself to the last piece of cake on the plate, she will die a spinster. But if she is offered the same piece and accepts, she is in luck with a handsome husband and £10,000 a year. A fall upstairs is particularly fortunate, and may indicate a wedding. A sprain in County Down never gives his young lady a pair of gloves, for "you never get the hand you give."

The spider is often a subject of superstition. It must not be killed, as has just been stated, and if it crawls on your clothes they will soon be replaced by new ones. But in that case you will be pinched, and your assailant will repeat, "A nip for new, a bite for blue!" Or you may be greeted with the words, "I wish you health to wear it, strength to buy it, and money to buy another!" The former slogan was very popular with the school-children, and the present writer remembers well the blue marks left on his epidermis when he wore anything new.

If one's foot itched, a journey was prognosticated; if one's nose, then some annoyance was in the offing. Shivering unexpectedly meant that "someone is walking over your grave." Somebody is talking about you if your ear burns: "Right your mother, left your lover." The right hand itches when you are about to receive money, and the left foretells paying out. Weak eyes are cured by pinching the ears for earwings. The miners believed that washing the back weakened it for heaving the coal so it was washed as little as possible.

The miners had a host of "vain imaginings" developed probably by the dangers of their calling. On leaving his humble abode for work at the mine the miner would turn back if the first person he met was wearing a white apron. Perhaps this arose because at one time white aprons were only worn while attending the sick or laying out a corpse.

The belief was afterwards extended to meeting a woman however dressed, and then to certain animals and birds. A white rabbit was a bad omen; so was a crow sitting about the mine buildings; if it alighted on the wire pulley wheel over which the wire trolley runs the miner wouldn't go down the mine that trip.

The Northumbrian fisherman was just as afraid of meeting a woman, whom he accounts as unlucky. If she steps over his net or lines, a greater misfortune is on the way. He dreads the pig too, and if he happens to meet one, will not put to sea. But these old beliefs are dying out before the progress of education, and when this generation passes they will only be known from records like these.

THE ENGLISH BLUEBELL Everyone has heard of the Bluebells of Scotland, (which by the way, are not confined to that Kingdom) but not so many know that there is an English Bluebell as well. It is a kind of hyacinth, botanically Scilla nutans, and flourishes throughout the British Isles and the Channel Islands. Linnaeus named it Hyacinthus non-scriptus, for a reason presently non-scriptus, for a reason presently to be related. I am writing of it because it now in flower in my garden and it is a long half-century since I saw it last!

As a general rule the Bluebell or Wild Hyacinth prefers the shade of a wood, and grows in places where there are many such as with a carpet. Tenyson, with his keen eye for such natural objects, says in the "Idylls of the King"— "They rode under groves that look'd a paradise Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth."

That seem'd the heavens up-breaking thro' the earth— A description in no way over-stated. The poet, however, omits to mention the fragrance of the flower, which is as delightful as its color.

The bulb from whence the nodding spikes of blue flowers spring, is very deeply bedded among the roots of the trees; perhaps eight or ten inches below the surface. This is probably because the offspring of the bulb, which is the parent bulb, so that it works downward in time; but it renders it difficult to collect the bulbs for the garden. I therefore procured some seeds from a William's friend four years ago, and now have the satisfaction of witnessing their first efforts in blooming.

Hyacinthus, according to the classical writers of Apollo and Zephyrus, but the latter, suspecting that he favored Apollo more than himself, killed the youth. Apollo, to comfort himself for the loss, out of the blood that was spilled, produced a beautiful flower which he named the hyacinth. Its petals he marked with the letters to express his grief. Our Bluebell has plain petals, with no markings, whence it is non-scriptus, "not-lettered."

It is fitting, at this point, to remark that another Scilla, the S. maritima is useful as well as ornamental. It is the essential ingredient in those rat poisons advertised as harmless. Really it is poisonous to many animals in large doses, and is very generally rejected by the stomach before any damage is done. Rats cannot recognize any poison, so that it is policy to bait heavily for two or three days and then collect the dose till their suspicions are lulled.

This species of Scilla was used as medicine in the rural England of my youthful days, under the name of "Syrup of Squilla"; small doses of it being given to infants and youngsters to bring up mucus in bronchial cases. For adults it was used in coughs, asthma and dropsy.

One of the show-places in Kew Gardens, London the wonderful botanical centre of England, is the "Queen's Walk." There in a grove grow countless hosts of Bluebells in the springtime, a path with light iron fencing leading through them.

A JEREMIAH Professor C. E. M. Joad (the name looks Biblical, but isn't) of the University of London, has written a book which if it did not belie its title, would be entirely superfluous in the present age and generation. "A Guide to Modern Wickedness," however, only gives a survey of the world as the professor sees it, and a grimy picture it is, first of the fiery little philosopher has a slap at the English farmer. Evil, says Joad, is the monopoly of no class or group: "of all people, farmers—who live close to the beauty of nature, should be kindly, generous folk. Instead he finds them cunning and cruel, infinitely grasping and always turning crusty." In this case the Professor, barking up the wrong tree: the man who is forced to sell his product below cost six years out of seven on the average, can hardly be called crusty; though he well may be. For months before the September crisis the farmers that "kings" were openly praying for war. War would put up prices, in-

crease Government allowances, make farmers more important. . . . In war time the farmer is a looser job. What is the slaughter of ten million young men to him? . . . I doubt if there are many human beings anywhere to be found more dead to beauty, more callous to suffering, and sadder world a "It is not to be governed by the English than by any other people, because the English are, on the whole, kinder and more humane than other people. It is no doubt a great pity that they are stupid."

NOTES ON ISLAND PLANTS The Portulacaceae The range of this, the Purslane Family, is mostly southward, but MacGowan's list of F. E. I. plants in the Spratly and Cook Islands, caroliniana, has been found at Wheatley River. The list is dated 1907, and I should be glad to learn if this plant is still extant.

The Nymphaeaceae We have two Water Lilies, one truly native, and another introduced. The native is the Yellow Pond Lily, Nymphaea advena, common in still or stagnant water. On examination the plant growing in Mermaid Lake was found to be N. advena, variety variegata, which has flowers partly purple, and leaves with shorter rounder lobes and a closed sinus (slot). The flower is an odd-shaped structure with a large stigmatic disc.

Josselyn, who wrote "New England's Rarities" (published in London 1672), recorded that he found the native Indians eating yellow water lily roots, after boiling them long: "they tasted like sheep liver." Robert Brown, another traveller, says the seeds formed a staple article of diet among the Kiama Indians of Southern Oregon, in the Pacific Railroad Report of 1856. Newberry states that he saw many hundred bushels of the seed collected for winter use among the Indians of the west coast, and says that the seeds taste like broom-corn and are apparently very nutritious.

The Water Lily, Pond Lily, or Sweet-scented Water Lily, to give its full name—, according to American botanists, Castalia advena. I have not been able to find any distinction between this plant and the English Nymphaea alba of Linnaeus. No flower shows better the transitional forms from petals to stamens than the yellow water lily roots, after boiling them long: "they tasted like sheep liver." Robert Brown, another traveller, says the seeds formed a staple article of diet among the Kiama Indians of Southern Oregon, in the Pacific Railroad Report of 1856. Newberry states that he saw many hundred bushels of the seed collected for winter use among the Indians of the west coast, and says that the seeds taste like broom-corn and are apparently very nutritious.

CANNING

I wish to announce that I will be in a position to take care of the canning of your surplus garden vegetables and fruits at reasonable rates.

GULF GARDEN CANNERIES EDWIN H. COOK Proprietor

Canners of Cook's Fork & Beans & Boston Brown Bread 457-6-17-19-22-24-26-21

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming

According to statistics released from Washington, 4,718 silver skins entered the United States during the month of April. They were shipped from Norway, Canada and the United Kingdom. The total number of skins shipped from Canada from January to May first was 16,761. Norway was second with 15,781. London was third with 2,423. They were valued at upwards of \$700,000. For the same period last year 6,236 skins were imported. The average value of the pelts imported this year was \$26.47, which is six dollars a skin less than the average value of the skins imported the previous year.

James Donald, Winnipeg, representing the Hudson's Bay Company, London, England, spent Tuesday to Thursday in Charlottetown and Summerside this week. Donald's business places him in contact with the various fur consignment houses who do business with the Hudson's Bay Company. He believes all the silver fox pelts now in London will be cleaned up before the new crop is offered in November and December. He sources expect the increase in price or any firmer tendency but is confident of the demand.

Asked how many silver foxes his company has in stock, Donald replied he had upwards of 160,000 pelts; at one of their sales some 67,000 were catalogued. Looking back a decade the number seen in the market has been quite a London with eight or nine thousand skins was a rarity. The jump in world production has exceeded, or almost exceeded, the jump in demand. Of course, the last few years all we thought of silver foxes was for neckpieces. Had not the trimming trade realized its mistake, the garment industry and other adjuncts of ladies' wearings apparel it would be a blue day indeed for us. Now, however, we are faced with competition from a new source, the Eskimo. Eskimo fox, cross fox, blue fox, platinum fox—by fox pelts defy a variety of shades to match the tones of the garment industry is being called upon to produce a number of pelts to be placed on view to a figure that will approximate the demand for that particular shade. The pelts kept in reserve will have the advantage of freshness, not having been shown or matted around when they appear on the next sale and will attract more attention from the buyers.

Of course the real solution of the problem that is confronting us is the cutting down of production. We noticed the other day where there could not be too much production. It was all against the New Deal theory of regulating so that we know, any of us who have over-production in our line or who have noticed our neighbors over-producing their goods, or any other commodity, that such over-production is not rewarded by a larger amount of money for the product but invariably results in low prices and a general loss of interest in the product. World production of 600,000 fox pelts could be absorbed without too great a strain and would result in a healthy industry giving the fur farmer a reasonable return for his toil and effort; but one million pelts such as produced in 1938-39 is an almost indigestible quantity so slowly can they be reduced.

If we escape with a whole skin this year—which I believe we will—we will indeed be lucky, as it looked at one time as though there might be a real price debacle. Once again we must give our commendation to our fox consignment firms here in Summerside, and one in Charlottetown, but for whose system of organized marketing there would have been dire results.

The annual meeting of the Silver Fox Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association on Tuesday was a great success, and real progress was made when it was decided to take over the responsibility of holding a silver fox pelt show. Last year it was Lowell Hancock who stepped into the breach and was largely responsible for putting it through. It proved so popular that no one would like to see it discontinued. The Silver Fox Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association are the logical ones to carry on the work as they have years of experience in staging fox shows and have a fairly decent reserve fund to be called upon for the initial expense of such a venture.

The dates selected for the annual show at Charlottetown this season are November 21st to 25th. This is about three weeks later than other years. The change in dates has been made at the request of a great many ranchers who are of the opinion that the early dates, November 1st to 5th, had the effect of causing them to feed heavier in preparation for the show and therefore put their foxes off-color. The only trouble about the later date is the uncertainty of the weather. If good weather favors the show then the foxes should be at their best or almost at their best, and a wonderful line of exhibitors will result. The date will also give Ontario breeders an opportunity to take in the Royal Winter Fair and come here to secure their requirements. We understand there are quite a number who will be looking out for new blood this year.

Congratulations to President-elect George E. Brown of Charlottetown who has done so much for silver fox breeding interests in the Province. Almost invariably the pedigrees of show winners in recent years trace back to him. He is a consistent exhibitor, and his son W. W. Brown, The Association should make excellent progress under his leadership.

Jim Donald of the Hudson's Bay Company, believes that there will be a marked increase in mink raising this year. He thinks it would not be surprising if production was doubled in 1940. Mink farming pays even at fairly low averages he says, because the equipment is small and labor does not present too much overhead and feed is reasonable per pelt, so that if the present prices do fall 25% there is still money in mink farming.

The following interesting communication has been received from our old friend P. J. Williams, Summerside:

WHAT NEXT

"When reading of Parthenogenesis on page 29 of the June Canadian Silver Fox and Fur we were prompted again to resort to Webster who is still regarded as an authority on words—their etymology, pronunciation, signification, etc.—to see if the word had a place in his vocabulary. Yes, it is in the dictionary, and its meaning is given as 'the act or process of reproduction without the introduction of seminal matter from a male.'"

"It is referred to by O.K. Thomson the contributor as being reported to be the first scientific 'virgin birth' in the mammalian world. It has been termed the 20th century miracle of 1939.

"Dr. Gregory C. Pincus, who has done much research work in mammalian reproduction is credited with having first observed in a female rabbit which ova he transferred to the womb of a virgin doe that after a normal pregnancy gave birth to a litter of three. All the progeny of parthenogenetic birth has so far been females. This is such an innovation that it is with difficulty we can persuade ourselves to consider it seriously.

"Should this system of breeding wholly from females become practical and general in the different species of animals a male's sphere of usefulness would consequently be very much restricted, and a good polygamous male fox would be priced at not more than half value.

Mr. Albert Murley who is one of Prince Edward Island's publicity representatives at the New York World's Fair has forwarded some advertisements for Canadian firms having exhibits at the Fair to his father, Mr. J. M. Murley. One of these was an advertisement for a brochure put out by the Holt-Renfrew Company Limited, wholesale and retail furriers of Montreal and other cities, advertising silver fox pelts and skins. Attention to their display by stating "these were among the finest Prince Edward Island silvers, the place where the best silver foxes come from."

Guernsey Breeders Elect New Slate

Benjamin Newsome Harrington was elected president of the Guernsey Breeders' Association at the annual meeting of the organization here Wednesday night. Mr. Harold Leard, Kelvin was named secretary, and Mr. Guy E. E. Bradley was re-elected secretary. Other members of the executive include, William Johnston, New London, Chester MacLure, Murray Harbor, New Brunswick.

The session, held in the Agricultural Hall, was presided over by Mr. Frank Townsend of Summerside, retiring president. Routine reports of activities of the organization for the past year included business of the meeting. In order to encourage new breeders it was decided to give financial assistance in the purchase of the first registered Guernsey female. Application should be made to the secretary, Mr. L. V. Roper, Federal Live Stock Superintendent and Mr. S. C. Wright, Provincial Department of Agriculture, Fieldman.

warmth in the soil. Hence the slow growth of stems and leaves or the vegetative organs of the plants. Root growth is, however, taking place and with warmer weather plant growth will be quite rapid. But hay fields have only a few weeks before they will be blooming and ready to cut. A hundred pounds of Nitrate of Soda per acre may be mixed with fine soil or road dust to give bulk; and if applied now when the grass is dry, or just before rain which washes the fertilizer off the plants and down into the soil, it should cause not only more rapid and heavier growth but also a higher percentage of protein in the hay. Nitrate will benefit from the nitrogen residue, and the cost of Nitrate application should thus repay the farmer who would otherwise be short of good hay and fall pasture. A 100 lbs. of Nitrate per acre also works wonders on pale green and weak grain fields. The regular pasture fields which are backward in growth require a top-dressing of barnyard manure

or complete fertilizer. The 5-10-5 brand is relatively cheap this season and 100 lbs. per acre is the usual application. If the grass and clover plants in the pasture are thus fed, they will get a start on the weeds and tend to crowd them out. Hay and pasture fields polluted with sheep sorrel and golden rod (yellow weed) are deficient in lime, and the soil is strongly acid. These weeds tolerate high acidity, but alfalfa, red and alsike clovers and most grasses require neutral or alkaline soil. While a present application of manure or fertilizer will encourage the grasses and wild white clover now growing in the meadows and pastures, one or two tons of ground limestone dumped into the sod after early September rains will encourage the clovers and better grasses. If the field in question is desired later for potatoes, soil samples taken to plowing depth from different parts of the field may be mixed together and a pound or two sent to Dominion Chemist, Experimental Farm, Ottawa. Enclose name and address, and request rate of application of ground

limestone to neutralize acidity. Farmers who are doubtful of these recommendations should leave an occasional strip across the field without any fertilizer, manure or limestone. Those who had to buy hay and grain this spring may decide that the money or credit invested in fertilizers and limestone, will produce more and better feed on their own farms without paying tribute to middlemen and Railways.

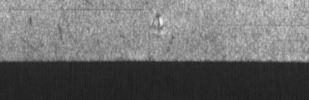
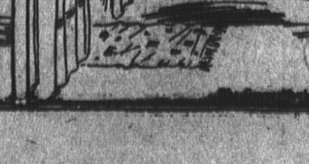
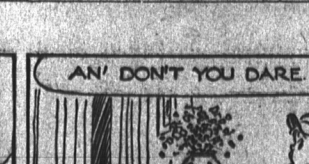
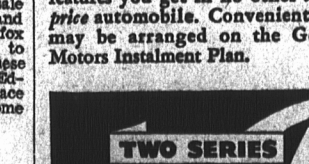
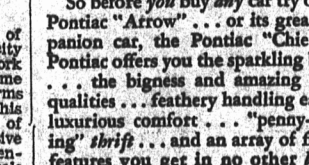
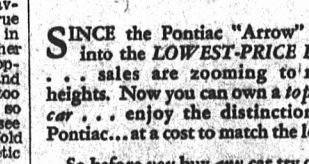
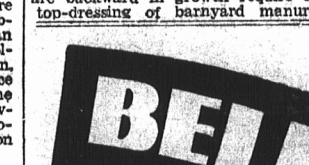
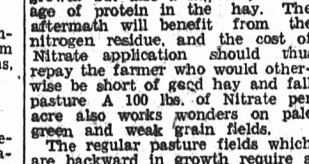
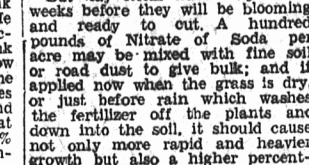
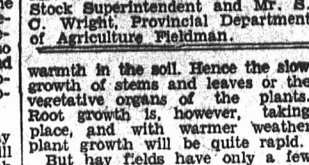
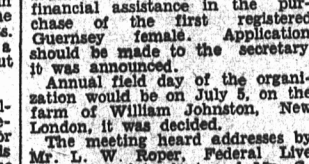
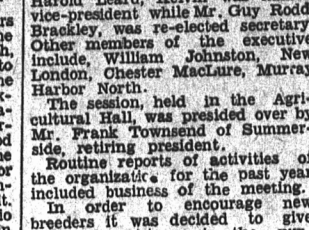
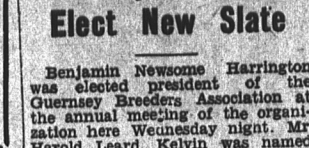
SLOW THINKER

Father: "It's a good plan, my dear, to think before you speak." Daughter: "But, dad, when I do think, the girls have changed the subject."

Kind Lady: "My poor man, how did you ever come to such a condition?"

Wesley Bill: "Ma'am, I'm a victim of over-education. When I was a kid I read so much about the blessing's of poverty that I see'n' natchally could not work."

Minard's relieves aches.



The Jersey cow, Golden Crown Princess (left) world's record milk producer with 19,073 lbs. of milk, 891 lbs. of fat, and her daughter Aggie Girl Beauty, with a senior two year old record of 12,182 lbs. of milk, 870 lbs. of fat. Aggie is a three-quarter sister of her dam, both being by the same sire. These cows, bred and owned by Albert Quinlan, Warden, Quebec, have a mature equivalent average of 936 lbs. of fat, one of the highest dam-daughter production averages of the breed. The sire of these great cows is Oxford's Brownie Boy, at the head of the herd of J. F. Desmarais, Fredericton, Quebec.

Advertisement for Pontiac cars with the slogan 'BELIEVE YOUR OWN EYES!' and 'PONTIAC IS PRICED RIGHT DOWN WITH THE LOWEST..'

Advertisement for Pontiac Arrow cars, featuring 'TWO SERIES' and 'PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN' models, and listing 'HARDING'S GARAGE, Summerside' as an associate dealer.

Advertisement for F.W. Lamplough & Co. Limited, Montreal, featuring 'ROYAL FOX FEED' and 'A LARGE PUP CROP'.

Advertisement for PULVEX disinfectant, highlighting its effectiveness against germs and its use in various settings.

Advertisement for MINARD'S RHEUMATIC OINTMENT, claiming to provide instant relief for pains, sprains, bruises, and rheumatic aches.

Advertisement for The St. John Milling Company Ltd., New Brunswick, featuring a cartoon illustration of a man and a woman.

Advertisement for TIPPIE AND 'CAP' STUBBS, featuring a cartoon illustration of a man and a woman.

Advertisement for a cartoon strip featuring a man and a woman in a domestic setting.

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